

# THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."—"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

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## ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS,

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

## REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

"Commune with your own heart and in your own chamber,  
"and be still."

PSALM, iv. 4.

If this exhortation applies with peculiar force on one day above another, it is at the close of the last day of the week, which has in it many incitements to serious reflection. One week is gone, and a reflecting mind can hardly dismiss it, without considering how it has been spent: Its labours are over, its trials are past, its pleasures have been enjoyed, and a good practical lesson may be drawn by summing up the account. Like men of worldly prudence, (who, alas! are often wiser in their generation than the children of light) we may strike a profit and loss balance of the accounts of the past week, and judge with pretty good accuracy how we are going on—whether we are laying up treasures of the right kind and in the right place, or whether we are proceeding in a ruinous scheme, and wasting that which we can never buy again. By this too, we shall be able to judge of the comparative value of vice and virtue, religion and irreligion, and see which is the most profitable rule of life. Have we embarked in any scheme of vice? What is the return we have drawn from it? Sensual pleasure, low and degrading, short in continuance, unsatisfactory in enjoyment, bitter in the memory, disgraceful in the story, heavy on the conscience. In the true calculation of happiness the balance stands against it, and if wise, we will take care not to let such losing ventures appear in our future accounts. How different stands the balance with actions, which truly conscientious and pure motives have prompted—suppose they did require some little sacrifice from us, how will they have repaid us!—In peace of mind and approbation of conscience, they have a hundred times made up to us all loss of selfish gratification. They stand high on the favourable side of the account; and if we understand our own interest, we will be very careful to let them often appear there.

But to drop all figurative language, on a subject which needs no figures to exalt its importance, let me admonish all those who may chance to peruse these observations, of the value of that frequent examination and reflection in regard to their spiritual state, of

which they so well understand the use in application to their temporal interests. And besides the general principles, I would inculcate the necessity of stated periods for the performance of this duty; for being a duty which has an equal claim on one day as well as another; unless we ourselves beforehand make the selection, it will share the fate of all unappropriated duties, and be shifted off from day to day, until the period of its performance is past; until sickness or old age overtake us, and death put an end at once to all delay and postponement: And what makes this the more probable, is, that the examination of our lives is a hard and thankless task, when we find much in them to censure; a task, which, unless a man takes up from sense of duty, he never will from inclination: And what reason makes probable, experience shews to be the case. Men live and die without ever seriously performing a duty most essential to their spiritual welfare, and that, not from denying its importance, but from continually putting it off, without any specified period for attending to it.

If these things be so, if the importance of the duty be so great, and delay so dangerous, what shall we say in answer to this exhortation? Shall we say with FELIX—"Go thy way this time, when I have a convenient season I will send for thee?" Why so we have said for twenty, perhaps for forty years past. How then can we be justified in depending on this vague and uncertain resolution? If we have neglected it thus long, what security have we that we will not neglect it much longer? Believe me we have none; what is delayed to-day, will be delayed to-morrow; what is put off from this year, will be put off from the next, until at length no to-morrow or next be left us. This is, indeed, a most important subject, and not to be given the go by, like the ordinary topics of life: Seriously attended to, and well performed, it secures to us the greatest comfort in life, the strongest solace in death, and the best preparation we can make through a Redeemer's merits for a blessed Eternity: Neglected, it will ever be a thorn in our side for our conscience to wound us withal, and the heaviest weight on our spirits in the hour of death. "How long halt ye," said the Leader of Israel to the backsliding Jews, "how long halt ye be between two opinions? If the LORD be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Let not this reproach rest upon us—the LORD he is God, and let us follow him. Let us reverence his name, and obey his precepts; let us strictly examine our hearts and conduct; let us learn our offences; let us bewail; let us reform them—and proceeding in sincerity in this holy work, God's grace will aid our

weakness, and his blessing will crown our labours with success.—If we acknowledge self-examination and repentance to be our duty, why, let us but act like reasonable men and perform our duty: If we delay it in some shew of reason, let us examine those reasons and see if they be sufficient to justify our delay: Let us canvass them like men who are in earnest in the matter; like men who seek their true duty, and not the justification of their neglect. If we examine them in this spirit, we will find there is nothing in them: Arguments for delay, are arguments for sin; it is a little more indulgence of inclination; a little longer enjoyment of the world; a little more pleasure or a little more gain; and then we will controul our passions, and correct our lives by God's holy word. But what a mockery is this of God and Religion! He calls upon us for our best days and our purest affections; and do we think to put him off with the dregs of life, and passions sated with the world? He commands us to make Him and his law the first in our thoughts and motives. We think it sufficient to call Him in at the last, to fill up the vacuity which the world leaves. But it will not do. Our religion must be a ruling principle: It must regulate our lives, and not be regulated by them: Love to God must hold the first place in our affections; obedience to Him the first place in our motives: Faith in our Saviour must be a living principle, bringing forth in us the fruits of the Spirit: Gratitude and thankfulness our lives must speak, as well as our lips. Such must our religion be, and such alone will God accept. Let us then arouse ourselves and lay these things seriously to mind; for whether we chuse it or not, reflection will one day come upon us; and the only question for us to decide, is, whether it shall come as friend or foe; whether it shall be to us a source of sorrow or joy. If now we accustom ourselves to a serious examination of our lives, reflection will ever be a welcome guest to our bosoms, and in the hours of feebleness or disease, the greatest solace we can have of our situation. It will tell of time well spent, of talents well employed; it will tell of the constant endeavour of a good life to live above the corruption of nature, and to purify ourselves by God's grace to be meet companions for the saints in glory; and when the closing scene arrives, reflection will cheer us with the prospect of a better world, through the merits of a blessed Redeemer. But behold the reverse. If we drive away reflection by business or pleasure, and allow life to run on in carelessness or vice, we indeed put off the evil day, but to come upon us with tenfold horrors. The day of reflection must and will come; in the hours of sickness and despondency it will overtake us, and take full and ample vengeance of our neglect.—It will harass a weakened body and a troubled mind, and drive us almost to despair: It will follow us to the brink of the grave, and never leave us, till closing our eyes in this world, we open them in the next; open them on such scenes as neither eye nor ear hath witnessed, nor human reflection ever painted. Ask me not, what a dying sinner feels. We see but the least of his sufferings. God alone can tell the horrors of that hour. It is not that he is closing his eyes in death, it is not that weeping friends and relatives sur-

round him; it is not the pain of dying; these are nought to him; but it is the remembrance of an ill-spent life, the anguish of a troubled mind, the remorse of an awakened conscience, the sting of guilt and sin, the dread of an avenging God, which prey upon him and bring him down in horror to the grave; and even while life is retiring and the sinner seems at rest, the spirit may yet be raging within; that fire which is never quenched may already be lighted up in it; that worm which never dies may already be gnawing within: And so it is—that fire is an awakened conscience, that worm is remorse; and so long as reflection holds her seat, can never be extinguished, can never die. These are horrors which we who stand by the dying bed, cannot see, nor, perhaps, very rightly conceive, and God grant we may never feel. But would we make sure, not to feel God's hand thus heavy upon us, let us court reflection now, that we may learn all it can say against us; let us examine our lives—let us reform them. Doing this in sincerity, reflection will be our comfort, God will be our Friend, and whether we live or die, we may rest with humble confidence on our Saviour's merits.

PASTOR.

#### CHRISTIAN HERALD.—SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

We have received the first and second numbers of THE CHRISTIAN HERALD, a weekly paper, by JOHN E. CALDWELL, of New-York. It is well printed in octavo form, containing 16 pages; and the Editor is well qualified for the duties of his new employment.

The principal and most important matter contained in the numbers we have received, is a very interesting account of the commencement and progress of SUNDAY Schools in Great-Britain. We feel bound to present the readers of the VISITANT with this history of a Benevolent Institution, from which the poor of Great-Britain have experienced such happy effects; an Institution which is just beginning to take root in our own soil, and from which we may likewise expect to reap the fruits of industry, virtue and piety, in an unfortunate class of beings, who are now too much distinguished for idleness, vice and wickedness.

—♦—  
FROM THE CHRISTIAN HERALD.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Among the several institutions which are the offspring of Christian philanthropy, and which do honour to the Christian name, that of *Sunday Schools* certainly holds no ordinary rank. In Great-Britain, where the system appears to have originated, its value has been amply tested, by an experience of more than thirty years of its benign effects upon the lower orders of society.

The attention and interest which this subject has excited in the United States, and especially the exertions in its favour, which it has recently called forth in this city, have induced us to give it a prominent place in this paper.

The benefit which the cause of religion derives from teaching the illiterate poor to read the Bible, is of itself one of the greatest that

can be promoted by human agency upon that large, and formerly much neglected, portion of the community.

It has other highly important advantages also, which will be fully developed in the history and progress of that institution; a summary of which it is intended occasionally to exhibit in the course of this publication.

We shall commence that history, by furnishing an account given of its origin by its venerable founder, Robert Raikes, in a letter addressed to Col. Townley, of Lancashire, premised by some remarks respecting the reflections which prompted that philanthropist to plan this laudable undertaking; as extracted from *The Sunday School Repository*, published in England.

At a period of life when success rarely inspires moderation in the pursuits of fortune, Mr. Raikes remembered the great law of his Christian profession, that *no man liveth to himself*. He looked around for occasions of disinterested, yet not unproductive, exertion, and found them near at hand. Prevention of crimes, by instruction or reproof, and compassion for even justly suffering criminals, were united in his idea of Christian benevolence, which

To every want, and every wo,  
To guilt itself, when in distress,  
The balm of pity will impart,  
And all relief that bounty can bestow.

According to the *European Magazine*, for 1788, (xiv. 315.)

"The first object that demanded his notice was the miserable state of the county Bridewell, within the city of Gloucester, which being part of the county gaol, the persons committed by the magistrate out of the Sessions for petty offences, associated, through necessity, with felons of the worst description, with little or no means of assistance from labour; with little, if any, allowance from the county; without either meat, drink, or clothing; depending chiefly on the precarious charity of such as visited the prison, whether brought thither by business, curiosity, or compassion.

"To relieve these miserable and forlorn wretches, and to render their situation supportable at least, Mr. Raikes employed both his pen, his influence, and his property, to procure them the necessities of life; and finding that ignorance was generally the procuring cause of those enormities which brought them to become objects of his notice, he determined, if possible, to procure them some moral and religious instruction. In this he succeeded, by means of bounties and encouragement given to such of the prisoners as were able to read; and these, by being directed to proper books, improved both themselves and their fellow-prisoners, and afforded great encouragement to persevere in the benevolent design. He then procured for them a supply of work, to preclude every excuse and temptation to idleness."

Mr. Raikes could not pursue his generous purpose towards these forlorn outcasts from civilized life, without many serious reflections. His mind must have been peculiarly affected with the sad consequences arising from the neglect, or rather the total absence, of opportunities for early instruction among the poor. He was thus prepared to indulge a second project, the success of which he lived to see extending, probably, beyond his most sanguine expectations.

Mr. Raikes, in the year 1783, inserted a paragraph in his weekly Journal, giving a short account of the good effects resulting from the first little trial of a Sunday School. This paragraph chanced to fall under the inspection of Colonel Townley, a gentleman of Lancashire, who in consequence, (the paragraph being anonymous) wrote to the Mayor of Gloucester, desiring further information, which produced the following letter. Colonel Townley having desired leave to publish this letter in the Gentleman's Magazine, (see Gentleman's Maga-

zine for 1784, vol. 54, p. 410.) that publication diffused the subject throughout the kingdom.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## EPISTOLARY.

LETTERS  
FROM BARON HALLER TO HIS DAUGHTER,  
On the Truths of the Christian Religion.

### LETTER IV.

Divine Mission of Jesus Christ. To Him were united all those qualities which bespeak the true Ambassador of God. We believe the existence of many things, the manner of whose existence we can neither ascertain nor comprehend. This Doctrine illustrated from observations and reasonings on the properties of bodies, or physical existence. Application of it to spiritual subjects.

I SHALL not attempt to explain this great mystery; let the relation of it suffice. At a time precisely marked by the ancient prophecies, there appeared a person endued with extraordinary powers; he communicated to men a doctrine, which he declared he had received from God, and taught them what were the means which God, in his infinite wisdom, had adopted to expiate their transgressions.—This divine person performed all the conditions to which this pardon was annexed; and, taking upon himself the sins of the world, shed forth his blood in order to efface them. If it is true that this messenger or envoy of God hath actually appeared in the world—if it is true that his words have been faithfully preserved—if it is true that he hath confirmed his heavenly mission by an infinite number of miracles, and that his doctrine excelled, both in wisdom and purity, all that the united efforts of men have ever been able to discover—if the sanctity of his life corresponded with the precepts he had delivered; and, lastly, if this eminent person hath been equally incapable of deceiving and being deceived, equally exempt from error and falsehood, we may then answer this grand question, *How can man make his peace with God? How can guilty mortals wait with confidence the sentence of the Sovereign Judge?*—Nothing now remains but the proof of his appearance. I shall, therefore, endeavor to inquire, what are the distinguishing marks which ought to characterise a messenger sent from God; and to shew that they all met in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; for in him were united all those qualities which should evidence the true ambassador of God: from whence we must conclude that all his words are true. It would be no proof of good sense to question the veracity of such a person. What man is there, who hath at all reflected on the narrow limits of the human understanding, and hath in the least studied nature, but hath had occasion to remark, that we are assured, from experience, of the existence of a great number of facts which are contrary to our speculations?—When we could examine the doubtful principles upon which we pretend to decide on the credibility of things, we may easily perceive how little the objections, which are suggested to us by the feeble lights by which we are directed in our researches, should hinder us from believing that which is marked with the impression of truth. In material objects, we are daily obliged to confess, that what appeared to us as contradictory, is however true, and that of necessity; with how much more reason then may we apply this observation to things which are spiritual. It is from experience, or from the conformity of a great number of events, that we ordinarily deduce the measure of possibility, or the rules by which to form our judgment; these are confined within certain limitations, beyond which we cannot penetrate. Who can comprehend, for example, a Being who hath existed from all eternity, and who is without beginning? Yet the enemies of revelation confess the necessity of such a Being; demonstrative evidence forces from them this confession. Is not this acknowledging, that a thing really exists, which, however, is repugnant to all our conceptions? And are not the divisibility of bodies, and their motions, amongst those things which are incomprehensible? The

last is proved by the evidence of the senses; but yet the understanding forms no clear idea of it: The first is admitted from the proofs of reason, though it has all the appearance of impossibility.—This instance hath been often proposed; it is not the less true, because of its application to our subject. An African hath never had an opportunity of seeing that water was capable of solidity, and of cutting like a piece of metal; an European hath never seen that mercury could be fixed, and become like solid silver. When, therefore, the African concludes, from an infinite number of experiments, the result of which is always the same, that water will never lose its fluidity; and when an European makes a similar conclusion relative to mercury, from the same principle, it is manifest that they both form erroneous deductions, by reasoning from the constant experience of all men and all times.

And whence is the cause of these errors? A variety of facts and occurrences pass in review before us; from particular cases, we are too apt to draw a general inference, and conclude that they must all resemble one another, though perhaps there are many of them which we have not seen.

If, then, we are liable to error, in regard to the properties of bodies, which, notwithstanding, are subject to the examination of the senses, and if experience oftentimes obliges us to retract the judgment which we had formed; how much more cautious ought we to be in pronouncing our opinions on the properties of spirit; or in presuming to determine on the impossibility of a thing, because we have not proved it, and are not able to comprehend its essence or manner!

All that we would pretend to infer from these reflections is, that the difficulties which present themselves, in every kind of truths, though we may not be in a condition to form an absolute determination upon them, should not prevent us from giving them our assent when once they are sufficiently proved. How little reason then have we to be surprised, if we meet with difficulties in conceiving the manner of the union betwixt God and man; since we have certain proofs that our Saviour, who was incapable of falsehood, hath represented himself as partaking of the Divine Nature?

#### BIOGRAPHICAL—SELECTED.

##### SKETCH

##### OF THE LIFE OF LADY RACHEL RUSSEL.

BY LINDLEY MURRAY.

LADY RACHEL RUSSEL, daughter of the Earl of Southampton, was born about the year 1636. She appears to have possessed a truly noble mind, a solid understanding, an amiable and a benevolent temper. Her pious resignation, and religious deportment, under the pressure of very deep distress, afford a highly instructive example, and an eminent instance of the power of religion to sustain the mind in the greatest storms and dangers, when the waves of affliction threaten to overwhelm it.

It is well known, that the husband of this lady, William, Lord Russel, was beheaded in the reign of Charles the second; that he was a man of great merit; and that he sustained the execution of his severe sentence, with Christian and invincible fortitude. During the period of her illustrious husband's troubles, she conducted herself with a mixture of the most tender affection, and the most surprising magnanimity. She appeared in court at his trial; and when the attorney-general told him, "He might employ the hand of one of his servants in waiting, to take notes of the evidence for his use," Lord Russel answered, that "he asked none, but that of the lady who sat by him." The spectators, at these words, turned their eyes, and beheld the daughter of the virtuous Southampton rising up to assist her lord in this his utmost distress: a thrill of anguish ran through the assembly. After his condemnation, she threw herself at the king's feet; and pleaded, but alas! in vain, the merits and loyalty of her father, in order to save her husband.

When the time of separation came, her conduct appears to be wor-

thy of the highest admiration: for without a sigh or tear, she took her last farewell of her husband, though it might have been expected, as they were so happy in each other, and no wife could possibly surpass her in affection, that the torrent of her distress would have overflowed its banks, and been too mighty for restraint. Lord Russel parted from his lady with a composed silence; and observing how greatly she was supported, said, after she was gone, "The bitterness of death is now past;" for he loved and esteemed her beyond expression. He declared, that "she had been a great blessing to him;" and observed, that "he should have been miserable, if she had not possessed so great magnanimity of spirit joined to her tenderness, as never to have desired him to do a base thing to save his life." He said, "There was a signal providence of God, in giving him such a wife, in whom were united noble birth and fortune, great understanding, great religion, and great kindness to himself; but that her behaviour in his extremity, exceeded all."

After the death of her lord upon the scaffold, this excellent woman, encompassed with the darkest clouds of affliction, seemed to be absorbed in a religious concern, to behave properly under the afflicting hand of God; and to fulfil the duties now devolved upon herself alone, in the care, education, disposal, and happiness of her children; those living remains of her lord, which had been so dear to him, and which were, for his sake, as well as their own, so dear to herself.

The following short extracts from a few of her letters, evince the humble and pious frame of her mind; the great benefit she derived from her afflictions; and the comfortable hope she entertained of her future rest and felicity.

—“ You, my friend, who knew us both, and how we lived, must allow I have just cause to bewail my loss. I know it is common with others to lose a friend; but few can glory in the happiness of having lived with such a one, and few, consequently, can lament the like loss. Who but must shrink at such a blow, till, by the mighty aid of the Holy Spirit, they let the gift of God, which he has put into their hearts, interpose? O! if I did steadfastly believe, I could not be dejected; for I will not injure myself to say, I offer my mind any inferior consolation to supply this loss. No; I most willingly forsake this world, this vexations, troublesome world; in which I have no other business, than to rid my soul from sin, and secure my eternal interests; to bear, with patience and courage, my eminent misfortunes, and ever hereafter to be above the smiles and frowns of it: and having finished the remnant of the work appointed me on the earth, joyfully to wait for the heavenly perfection in God's good time, when, by his infinite mercy, I may be accounted worthy to enter into the same place of rest and repose, where he is gone for whom I grieve.”

—“ The future part of my life will not, I expect, pass, as perhaps I would choose.—Sense has long enough been satisfied; indeed so long, I know not how to live by faith: yet the pleasant stream that fed it near fourteen years together, being gone, I have no sort of refreshment, but when I can repair to that living Fountain, whence all flows; while I look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, expecting that day which will settle and compose all my tumultuous thoughts, in perpetual peace and quiet.”

—“ The consideration of the other world is not only a very great, but, in my small judgment, the only support under the greatest of afflictions that can beset us here. The enlivening heat of those glories, is sufficient to animate and refresh us, in our dark passage through this world: And, notwithstanding, I am below the meanest of God's servants, and have not, in the least degree, lived answerably to those opportunities I have had; yet my Mediator is my judge, and he will not despise weak beginnings, though there be more smoke than flame. He will help us in believing; and, though he suffer us to be cast down, will not cast us off, if we commit our cause to him.—I strive to reflect how large my portion of good things has been; and though they are passed away, no more to return, yet I have a pleasant work to do, to dress up my soul for my desired change, and fit it for the converse of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; among whom, my hope is, my loved lord is one; and my often repeated prayer to God is, that if I have a reasonable ground for that hope, it may give refreshment to my poor soul.”

—“From the enticing delights of the world, I can, after this event, be better weaned. I was too rich in possessions, while I possessed him. All relish now is gone. I bless God for it; and pray that I may more and more turn the stream of my affections upwards, and set my heart upon the ever-satisfying perfections of God: not starting at his darkest providences, but remembering continually, that either his glory, justice, or power, is advanced by every one of them, and that mercy is over all his works; as we shall one day, with ravishing delight behold. In the mean time, I endeavour to suppress all wild imaginations, which a melancholy mind is apt to let in, and to say, with the man in the gospel—“I believe, help thou my unbelief.”

—“It is the grace of God which disposes me to ask for, and thirst after such comforts as the world cannot give. What comforts it can give, I am most sure I have felt, and experienced to be uncertain and perishing. Such I will never more, the grace of God assisting, look after: And yet I expect a joyful day after some mournful ones; and though I walk sadly through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, humbling myself under the mighty hand of God, who will save in the day of trouble. He knows my sorrows, and the weakness of my person: I commit myself and mine to him.—The saddest state to a good soul, will one day end in rest. This is my best comfort, and a greater we cannot have; yet the degree is raised, when we consider that we shall not only rest, but live in regions of unspeakable bliss. This should lead us sweetly through the dark passage of the world; and suffer us to start at nothing we either meet with, or our fears suggest may happen to us.”

To Lady Essex, she wrote as follows:—“I beseech God one day to speak peace to our afflicted minds, and not to suffer us to be disappointed of our great hope. But we must wait for our day of consolation, till this world passes away: an unkind and trustless world this has been to us. Why it has been such, God knows best. All his dispensations serve the end of his providences; and they are ever beautiful, and must be good, and good to every one of us; and even these dismal ones are so to us, if we can bear evidence to our own souls, that are better for our afflictions; which is often the case with those who suffer wrongfully. We may reasonably believe our friends have found that rest we yet but hope for; and what better comfort can you or I desire, in this valley of the shadow of death we are walking through? The rougher our path is, the more delightful and ravishing will be the great change.”

She survived Lord Russel above forty years, and continued his widow to the end of her life. She died in the year 1723, in the 87th year of her age. Her continued trust and hope in Him, who had been the staff of her life, and her support in affliction, is evidenced by the following declaration, made not long before the end of her days. “God has not denied me the support of his Holy Spirit, in this my long day of calamity; but enabled me, in some measure, to rejoice in him as my portion forever. He has provided a remedy for all our griefs, by his sure promises of another life, where there is no death, nor any pain nor trouble, but fulness of joy, in the presence of Him who made us, and who will love us for ever.”

#### ANECDOTES.—SELECTED.

##### SUNDAY SCHOOL ANECDOTE,

*From the Appendix to the Fourth Report of the Hibernian Sunday School Society.*

As I was taking a walk some weeks since, I called at a house which I had not been in the habit of visiting, though the two children were regular Sunday scholars: after being received with a hearty welcome, and the most unequivocal expressions of joy, I sat down, and the good woman of the house addressed me as follows.—“We can't tell how happy we are to see you, for you must know, the children look upon you as their father; they were all in great grief

of late when they heard you were taken ill at A——, for they feared the school would come to nothing if you were dead.” Having expressed my hope that it would not fail, should it please God to call me hence, the good woman proceeded in the following manner.

“I lived several years at your friend Mr. J. M's; my master feared God, but I was totally ignorant. When he would begin to read, I would contrive to get away, for I hated to hear reading. I tell you this, that you may know how bad I was. It however pleased God to enlighten my mind under a sermon, which produced an earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come. Just at this time (about seventeen years ago) the Sunday school was begun, and I thought I could give all the world for it, if it were possible that I could learn to read the word of God. I enquired of many persons, whether it was possible that I could learn, as I was near forty years old; but they gave me no encouragement. At length I made free to ask you, and the answer you gave me, I will never forget as long as I live. In short, sir, you told me you had no doubt, if I persevered, but I would succeed. I believed your word; gave a penny for a small book; attended the Sunday school; learned the letters; began to spell; and in some time bought a Testament, which, thank God, I was enabled to read.” Having expressed my hope that she had derived instruction and consolation from the sacred Oracles, in the varied circumstances of life, she answered in the affirmative, quoting several pertinent passages, and applying them to her own state; at the same time observing, “My comfort has been greatly increased this year; for as you know my step-daughter Hannah, and my little daughter Anne, have attended the Sunday school since ever they were able; and Hannah got a premium of a Bible last year. Little Anne also improved so fast, that she was removed to the first class, and can now read the Bible. During the winter, they followed the advice given when the school was dismissed, and read three or four chapters every night; and, as I was not before acquainted with the Bible, (the Old Testament) it was like a new world opened to us; for though we are ignorant, the children tell what they hear at the school, and we speak about the meaning of what they read; and this affords us great comfort.” I observed that Hannah and Anne had given much satisfaction by their improvement and good conduct in school; but wished to know what effect it had on their conduct at home. She replied, “My step-daughter Hannah was only two months at the weekly school in her life; you see her improvement in learning, and she does her work without being bid; she will not suffer me to do a hard turn; she is good to her little sister, and she could not be better to me if she were my own child a hundred times over; I hope Anne will copy after her; in short, we have nothing but peace.” After expressing their gratitude to God for the benefits received from the Sunday School, and requesting an occasional visit, I took my leave.

#### BIBLE ANECDOTES.

*The following Anecdotes are from the Report of one of the Associations belonging to the North-East London Auxiliary Bible Society.*

A woman called on me to beg a Bible: I said, “Are you too poor to pay a penny a week?” “Yes, I am,” she answered: “I am a widow, with two children: my bed is straw, and my only support is sixpence a-day.” I called upon her, and found her story to be true: a Bible was given her, which she received with great joy. Her aged mother, who was sick, desired to be lifted from her bed of straw, that she might stand up to thank the Society. When she recovered, she called some of her poor neighbours together, and read to them: one of them said, “I wonder who made God!” “O,” replied she, “how can you think of uttering such a wicked saying? and so ignorant!” “Well,” said she, “I do not know any thing about it, but I will have a Bible, and then I shall know!”

Another poor woman shewed her Testament to a very wicked and ignorant man; and endeavoured to inform him what the Bible con-

tained. He was surprised; and immediately gave her three pence to get his name put down as a subscriber of that sum per week for a Bible. He went home to his wife, and said, "I have been subscribing for a Bible?"—"A Bible!" said she, "What is a Bible?"—"A book," replied he, "that says there is to be a Day of Judgment, and that you are to be called to an account for all the wicked things you have done."—They are now subscribing for a Bible with great cheerfulness.

Another case I shall mention, is that of a family on whom I called to get security for a poor woman, who was to have a box of linen from a Benevolent Society. While one went to borrow a pen and ink, I entered into conversation with the man about some pictures that hung round the room. The story was Joseph and his Brethren. On my observing that Joseph was represented far too young, he said with a smile of great contempt, "For my part, I know nothing at all about it. I never read a page of the Bible in my life; neither do I want to read it. This is what I amuse myself with," pointing to a piece of music, "and this is what I delight in."—"Well," I said, "that is amusement for time; the Bible is for eternity!" The man changed countenance instantly, and made no answer. I continued the conversation. His wife, who stood by during the time, burst into tears, and said, "Oh! am I too old to learn to read it? I will pay six pence per week to that Society which you say will let us have one for a penny, and we will go and hear the word of God preached."—I have the satisfaction to say, that they regularly attend Divine Worship, and now read the Bible daily. By their persuasion, two other families have become subscribers for Bibles.

*From a late London Paper.*

#### TESTIMONIES IN FAVOUR OF THE BIBLE,

BY CELEBRATED CHARACTERS.

The celebrated Sir William Jones, at the end of his Bible, wrote the following words:—"I have regularly and attentively perused these Holy Scriptures; and am of opinion, that this volume (independently of its divine origin) contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written.—The unrestrained application of them to events which took place long after the publication, is a solid ground for belief that they are genuine productions, and consequently inspired."

Mr. Addison, speaking of the superior perfections of the Sacred Volume to every human work, says, the great and glorious truths which it discovers to us, are, compared with those which we elsewhere acquire, as the Creator contrasted with his works. "Had Cicero," says he, "lived to see all that Christianity has brought to light, how would he who so fondly hoped for immortality, have lavished out all the force of eloquence in those noblest of contemplations—the Resurrection, and the Judgment that will follow it: How had his breast glowed with pleasure, when the whole compass of futurity, revealed in these pages, lay open to his view! How would he have entered, with the force of lightning, into the affections of his hearers, upon those glorious themes, which are contained in the Bible—themes, which when enlarged on by a skilful Christian orator, make us break out into the same expressions, as those of the two disciples who met our Saviour after he rose from the dead: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened unto us the Scriptures?"

The learned Mr. Locke, (after demonstrating the truth of the Holy Scriptures in various ways) thus expressed himself, in a letter to a friend, just before he died:—"Study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; for therein are contained the words of eternal life. The Bible has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and truth for its matter, without any mixture of error."

Similar testimonies in favour of the Bible might be adduced in the immortal Bacon, Lord Verulam; in the great Sir Isaac Newton, who wrote to prove the excellence of the Scriptures; in Mr. Boyle, who instituted means to elucidate their truth; in Mr. West, who wrote a Treatise on the subject of the Resurrection; in Lord George Lyttelton, whose illustrious rank received splendour from his talents, and who has done essential service to the Christian cause, by his admirable work on the conversion of St. Paul; all these it will be observed were Laymen, and therefore cannot be suspected of any *undue* partiality for the Scriptures; and to such distinguished names might be added those of a Milton, a Hale, a Johnson, a Cowper, a Bryant, a Beattie, a Cumberland—Laymen also most eminently distinguished for their learning and science; yet, who deemed all their learning, all science, of little worth, compared with what they derived from the Book of God.

The excellent Dr. Watts, (in his advice to a young man) says: "Whatever your circumstances may be in this world, value the Bible, as your best treasure; and, whatever may be your employment, look upon Religion as your best business. The Bible contains eternal life in it, and Religion is the only way for you to become possessed of it."

Dr. Leachman, upon his death bed, thus addressed the son of a nobleman who had been under his care. "You see, my young friend, the situation in which I now am. I have not many days to live, and am happy that you witness the tranquility of my last moments. But it is not tranquility alone; it is joy and triumph—nay, it is complete exultation." His features brightened, and his voice rose in energy as he spoke. "And whence," said he, "does this exultation spring?—From that Book," said he, pointing to the Bible.—"From that blessed Book, too much neglected indeed, but which contains invaluable treasures! Treasures of bliss and rejoicing, for it makes us certain, that this mortal shall put on immortality."

Judge Hale, in a letter to his children, says, "It has been my practice to require you to be frequent in reading the Scriptures, with due observation and understanding, which will make you wise for this world, and that which is to come." And in a letter to his son, he says, "There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use: it is want of understanding in them who think or speak otherwise."

Lord Rochester, in his last illness, would frequently lay his hand on the Bible, and say: "There is true philosophy. There is the wisdom that speaks to the heart. A bad life is the only grand objection to this book."

Sir John Eardly Wilmot, in a letter to his eldest son, expresses himself in these words: "Let me exhort you to read with the greatest attention both the Old and New Testaments, you will find your mind extremely becalmed by so doing, and every tumultuous passion bridled by that firm belief of a resurrection, which is so evidently marked out and impressed upon mankind, by Christianity."

Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his last illness, called a young gentleman, who sat up with him during the night, to his bed-side, and addressed him in these words: "Young man, attend to the advice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and who will shortly appear before his Maker. *Read the Bible every day of your life.*"

#### CONNECTICUT.

HARTFORD, APRIL 2.

#### INSTALLATION.

On the 27th ult. the Rev. CALEB J. TENNEY was installed colleague Pastor with the Rev. John Marsh, D. D. in the charge of the first church and society in Wethersfield. Mr. Cone, of Colchester, made the introductory prayer; Dr. Lyman, of Millington, delivered the sermon—Text, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Dr. Perkins of West-Hartford, made the installing prayer; Dr. Marsh gave the charge; Mr. Brace,

of Newington, expressed the fellowship of the churches; and Mr. Lockwood of Glastenbury made the concluding prayer.

### INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

#### MASSACHUSETTS.

NEWBURYPORT, APRIL 2.

Yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, the Rev. Mr. Miltimore's Meeting-house in Newbury, (Bellville,) was struck with lightning and wholly consumed by FIRE. The lightning, as it ran down the spire from the top of the steeple, parted and communicated fire on both sides of the building. It was first discovered by Mr. Miltimore's family; but the wind blowing fresh in a direction to carry the flames into the body of the house, every effort to save it from destruction proved abortive.—Many of the gentlemen belonging to the parish were attending the annual meeting. The engine belonging to Bellville being small, and having little or no water near, except such as was taken from the gutters in the highway, it was impossible to reach that part of the belfrey which first began to burn; and before those from town could be got there, it was completely enveloped in one entire sheet of flames. Nothing was or could be saved, except the cushions, books, and some of the windows in the lower story.—Thus, in a few moments, was reduced to ashes one of the best and most elegant meeting-houses in our vicinity; and with it the pride of the proprietors—the best hopes and prospects of the reverend pastor and family.

To behold the house of God wrapped in flames, was a scene awfully sublime! Added to this, let the reader imagine the feelings of distress which wrung the heart of this Rev. disciple of Jesus, who has long ministered the things of life to the people of his charge; the agonies of his wife, reduced by years of sickness to great infirmity; together with the grief of their children, and he may have some idea of their actual situation.

It is hoped that a liberal and beneficent public will again find pleasure in freely contributing to the calls of charity, and thereby heal the wounds of this family, and enable the parish soon to build a house of worship.

#### RHODE-ISLAND.

PROVIDENCE, MARCH 27.

"It is more blessed to give than receive."

A number of ladies in Providence, (R. I.) have associated under the name of the *Dorcas Society*, with a view to make and distribute clothing to the poor and indigent, at proper seasons, and have adopted the above title from pious Dorcas of old.\*

#### SOUTH-CAROLINA.

CHARLESTON, MARCH 30.

#### CONSECRATION OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

Another Temple has been built for the worship of Almighty God; and, being so far completed as to be fit for the reception of a congregation, it was solemnly consecrated on Thursday last, the 28th inst. by the Right Rev. Dr. DEON, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of South-Carolina, according to the ritual of that Church.

The duties which appertained to the Episcopal Office, were performed by the Bishop with great solemnity and devotion; and the sublime invocations of the blessings of the Almighty upon the sacraments which should be administered, and the rites and ordinances which should be performed in the new temple, was deeply impressive. The sentence of Consecration was read by the Rev. Dr. Dalcho, and

\* "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple, named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas; this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did."—Acts ix. 26.

the Morning Prayers were offered up to the throne of Grace by the Rev. Mr. Campbell. The Psalms, appointed for the occasion, were read by the Rev. Mr. Gervais, and the Lessons by the Rev. Dr. Gadsden, and the Rev. Dr. Frazer. The Sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Percy, from *Zachariah*, iv. 7. and the services of the day were concluded by the administration of the *Lord's Supper* by the Bishop, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Mills, the Rev. Mr. Fowler, and the Rev. Mr. Tschudy. The presence of a considerable number of the Orphan Children, who accompanied with their voices the organ by Mr. Eckhard, Sen. in the chants and psalms, gave additional satisfaction to the audience.

[*Courier.*]

### SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

ROME, JANUARY 18.

The congregation of Foreign Missions labours with the greatest zeal to re-establish its relations with various parts of the world. One of the most happy results, undoubtedly, is the special protection which its members have obtained from China and Abyssinia. They write from Pekiu, that the Emperor, having obtained a report from the tribunal of worship, of the sentences passed against the Jesuits, wrote at the bottom of the report, with his red, or indelible pencil,—“Let the Edict of the 11th January, 1724, cease to be a law of the Empire. There is only one God, and this God cannot be offended with the diversity of names which are given to him.” Any thing written with the red pencil can never be recalled: Decrees in other colours may be altered.

According to this imperial decision, the Edict of Toleration of the Great Emperor Kang Hi, of 1672, and that of 1711, have been again transcribed from the Tribunal of Rites, and transmitted, sealed with the great seal, covered with yellow satin, to Don Gaspaed della Cruce, a Portuguese. It is remarkable, that it was a Dominican of this name, and of the same nation, who in 1536, was the first to introduce the Christian Religion into China.

His Holiness received with the most lively joy, this pleasing intelligence. Father della Cruce had the honor to be presented to his eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State, along with the four novice Chinese Jesuits, who were conducted to the audience chamber by M. Concellieu, Director of the Propaganda.

We are assured that the Edicts of the Chinese Emperor reached our Court through the Portuguese Ambassador.

Twelve Jesuits will be sent to China in the Spring. His Holiness has addressed a brief felicitation to the Emperor of China, to thank him. We are even assured, that a Bull will be issued to regulate the discipline of the Chinese Churches.

### OBITUARY.

MASSACHUSETTS. At Wrenell, on Tuesday the 27th ult. the reverend and amiable Mr. JOSEPH KILBURN, in the 61st year of his age, and the 33d of his ministry. A gentleman highly esteemed through life, and greatly lamented at his death. On every account he was solicitous to maintain the honor of the Christian character, was found in the faith of the Gospel, and whilst he maintained the free and sovereign grace of God in our salvation, he was zealous of good works, and set against an ineffectual faith; for knowing that faith without works is dead; he applied himself diligently to the various duties of Christianity; and praised and magnified the Ministerial Office by his works, as well as with his lips. In his private life, the Gentleman and the Christian appeared to great advantage; he was in his constitution active, and from principle disposed to good works; was of an affable, condescending, and obliging disposition; kind, gentle, and good to all; he was in the highest degree tender and affectionate to his consort, children, and other connexions. By the death of this venerable servant of Christ, religion and community have sustained a heavy loss.

RHODE ISLAND. In Wrenham, on the 20th ultimo, Mrs. REBECCA M. FARRINGTON, consort of the Rev. Daniel Farrington, in the 48th year of her age.—To a lively genius and an improved mind, she united an amiable and virtuous disposition. Piety and benevolence were the predominant features of her character. During her life she seemed to bear continually upon her mind the injunction of doing unto others as she would that others would do unto her. She overcame the troubles and misfortunes of human life with Christian fortitude and patience, and rested on the joyful anticipation of meeting her Saviour and her God, in another and a better world. She has left a large family and a numerous acquaintance, who long will deeply deplore her irreparable loss.

## THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

**NEW-YORK.** In Plattsburgh, the 9th inst. in the 19th year of her age, Miss CATHARINE WOOLSEY, youngest daughter of Gen. Melanthon L. Woolsey, and sister of Major Woolsey and Mrs. W. Hubbell, of this village.—The *Plattsburgh Republican* in noticing this death, says—“This dispensation of Divine Providence has inflicted a wound in an amiable and highly respectable family, which time can never efface. Young, amiable, and accomplished, innocent and happy, she was the delight of her parents’ age, the vibrating chord in the bond of domestic felicity, and the admiration of a numerous society of friends.—In three short days those parents were called to weep over their fallen daughter, that family to mourn a departed sister, and society to lament one of its brightest ornaments. Philosophy and religion inculcate the principle of resignation to the will of Heaven, and to Him who has power to give and to take away, we ought to bow with reverence and with piety.”

**MARYLAND.** On the 19th inst. Mr. WM. REESE, of Dublin District, in Hartford County, after having breathed this sublunar air for the space of *one hundred and eight years, seventeen days!* He was a native of Cecil County, Maryland. It would be unpardonable to commit the remains of this worthy and venerable old man to the dust, without remarking, that he performed the civil and social duties of life in such an amiable

manner, as to attract the esteem of all who knew him: And throughout the whole of his long life-time, maintained a most unblemished character.

**VIRGINIA.** On Sunday the 31st March, 1816, departed this life near Fredericksburg, Virginia, in the 72nd year of his age, the venerable FRANCIS ASBURY, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.—Of him it may be said, “a great man has fallen in Israel,” having laboured in his Lord’s Vineyard more than fifty years, as an itinerant Minister. In the death of such a Labourer, the Church of Christ in general, and particularly that portion of it over which he was more immediately called to preside, has sustained a loss, which must be deeply felt and long deplored.

**SOUTH CAROLINA.** In Charleston, Mr. JOHN DUNN, aged 33—a native of Scotland.—He was a man of extensive science—an excellent Poet—and formerly a correspondent of the *CONTINENTAL*.—In an obituary notice he is spoken of as “the writer of the *Lay Curate*,” and that his poetical compositions “evinced the fire of Dryden, the simplicity of Spencer, the humour of Swift, the delicacy of Addison, and the sublimity and spirit of Milton.”

## POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

## SELECTED.

*From the BOSTON EVENING GAZETTE.*

The following lines were written by a Lady of Massachusetts—and reflect no little credit both on her head and her heart.

## THE SACRIFICE.

THE morning’s sun rose bright and clear—  
On Abram’s tent it gaily shone;  
And all was bright and cheerful there,  
All, save the Patriarch’s heart alone.

While God’s command arose to mind,  
It forced into his eye the tear;  
For, though his soul was all resign’d,  
Yet nature fondly linger’d there.

The simple morning feast was spread,  
And Sarah at the banquet smil’d,  
Joy o’er her face its lustre shed,  
For near her sat her only child.

The charms that pleas’d a monarch’s eye,  
Upon her cheek had left their trace:  
*His* highly augured destiny  
Was written in his heavenly face.

The groaning father turn’d a way,  
And walk’d the inner tent apart—  
He felt his fortitude decay,  
While Nature whisper’d in his heart:

“O! must this son, to whom was given  
The promise of a blessed land,  
Heir to the choicest gifts of heaven,  
Be slain by a fond parent’s hand?”

“This son, for whom my eldest born  
Was sent an outcast from his home,  
And in some wilderness, forlorn,  
A savage exile doom’d to roam?”

“But shall a feeble worm rebel,  
And murmur at a father’s rod?  
Shall he be backward to fulfil  
The known and certain will of God?”—

“Arise my son! the cruel fill,  
And store the srip with due supplies;  
For we must seek Moriah’s hill,  
And offer there a sacrifice!”—

The mother rais’d a speaking eye,  
And all a mother’s soul was there—  
“She fear’d the desert, drear and dry!  
She fear’d the savage, lurking there!”—

Abraham beheld, and made reply:  
“On Him, from whom our blessings flow,  
My sister, we with faith rely;  
‘Tis he commands, and we must go!”—

The dutious son in haste obey’d,  
The srip was fill’d, the mules prepar’d;  
And with the third day’s twilight shade  
Moriah’s lofty hill appear’d.

The menials then at distance wait—  
Alone ascend the son and sire;  
The wood on Isaac’s shoulder’s laid,  
The wood—to build his funeral pyre!”—

No passion swayed the father’s mind,  
He felt a calm, a death-like chill—  
His soul, all chastened, all resign’d,  
Bow’d meekly—though he shuddered still.

While on the mountain’s brow they stood,  
With smiling wonder, Isaac cries,  
“My father, lo! the fire and wood—  
But where’s the lamb for sacrifice?”—

The Holy Spirit stay’d his mind,  
While Abraham answered low, aside,  
With steady voice, and look resign’d,  
“God will himself a lamb provide!”—

But let no pen profane, like mine,  
On holiest themes, too rashly dare—  
Turn to the Book or Books divine,  
And read the blessed promise there.

Ages on ages roll’d away—  
At length the hour appointed came;  
And, on the Mount of Calvary,  
God did himself provide a Lamb!

CONSIDERATIONS ON  
PART OF THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH PSALM.  
A COLLEGE EXERCISE, 1690.

## I.

HEAVY, O Lord, on me thy judgments lie,  
Accurst I am, while God rejects my cry.  
O’erwhelm’d in darkness and despair I groan,  
And every place is hell; for God is gone:  
O! Lord, arise, and let thy beams control  
Those horrid clouds, that press my frighted soul;  
Save the poor wanderer from eternal night,  
Thou that art the God of light.

## II.

Downward I hasten to my destin’d place;  
There none obtain thy aid, or sing thy praise.  
Soon I shall lie in death’s deep ocean drown’d  
Is mercy there, or sweet forgiveness found?  
O save me yet, whilst on the brink I stand;  
Rebuke the storm, and waft my soul to land  
O let her rest beneath thy wing secure,  
Thou that art the God of power.

## III.

Behold the prodigal! to thee I come,  
To hail my father, and to seek my home.  
Nor refuge could I find, nor friend abroad,  
Straying in vice, and destitute of God.  
O let thy terrors, and my anguish end!  
Be thou my refuge and be thou my friend.  
Receive the son thou didst so long reprove,  
Thou that art the God of Love.